



REPORT TITLE: GFRS HR PROCESSES

Scrutiny meeting	Fire and Rescue Scrutiny Committee Friday 19 July 2024 at 10.00 am
Chair	<i>Cllr Jeremy Hilton</i>
Presenting Officer	Matt Armstrong, Area Manager (Temporary) for People and Organisational Development
Item Type	<i>Scrutiny</i>
Purpose of Report	GFRS HR PROCESSES To receive an overview on GFRS HR processes, including for promotions, disciplines and grievances.
Recommendations/ Action sought	
Forthcoming Decisions	
Background Documents	The following policies were referenced to within the report: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development and Promotions Policy• Grievance Policy and Management Guidance• Management of Attendance – Medical Absence Policy and Procedures• Recruitment Policy (currently under review)
Appendices	
Contact Information	

1. GFRS Promotions

1.1 Since January 2023 the Service has carried out seven wholetime promotions processes ranging from Area Manager to Crew Manager. In total offering 29 promotions from 96 applicants who applied.

Of these applicants overall:

- 1.1.1 12.5% applicants were female and 13.8% of successful applicants were female
- 1.1.2 4.2% applicants were BME and 6.9% of successful applicants were BME
- 1.1.3 4.4% applicants were external and 20.7% of successful applicants were external
- 1.1.4 65.6% of applicants were internal and 79.3% of successful applicants were internal

1.2 Key points of promotions process to address equality

- All processes have a Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) undertaken
- In addition to GCC jobs pages, all roles are advertised on National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Asian Fire Association (AFSA) and Women in the Fire Service (WFS) jobs pages
- Reasonable adjustments are offered to all applicants that declare a disability
- Each panel has representation from our BAME staff and is gender balanced. LGBT representation is also considered.
- Members of the interview panel should have undertaken the GCC Recruitment & Selection course and Unconscious Bias training as a minimum standard
- All applications are anonymised for shortlisting to remove any bias
- All evaluations are assessed by pairs to ensure diverse opinions and reduce bias
- Members of the SIGMUB and EDI Allies Group are invited to take part in the assessments
- External assessors are now used to evaluate candidates values and behaviours
- Scores are accumulated and all successful candidates must score 70% or above
- Internal candidates last year were offered the opportunity for Practise to Progress to support them in the process and this will be further rolled out this year
- Staff from under-represented groups are offered the opportunity to attend the Stepping Up Programme offered at Bristol University
- All unsuccessful candidates are placed in a development pool and offered development opportunities when available
- Data is collected at each stage of the process to track all applicants of under-represented groups and is used to review the process
- The Policy is reviewed annually using feedback from candidates
- HMICFRS recorded increasing confidence (up 15% since 2021) in the promotions processes

2 GFRS Firefighter Recruitment

- 2.1 As we recruited to a firefighter pool in 2021 there has been no wholetime firefighter recruitment since 2021.
- 2.2 We have carried out a firefighter transfer process and the data is as follows:
Of these applicants overall:
 - 2.2.1 6.7% applicants were female and 13.3% of successful applicants were female
 - 2.2.2 53.3% applicants were external and 33.3% of successful applicants were external
 - 2.2.3 46.7% of applicants were internal (On Call) and 66.7% of successful applicants were internal
- 2.3 The next planned wholetime recruitment campaign is due to commence in August 2024.

3 Discipline and Grievances

- 3.1 Managers at all levels are responsible for the performance of individuals and teams, and are empowered to undertake performance management steps where a decline in performance or behaviours has been identified. In most cases this initial work, using a recorded, informal process, supports a positive change and an improvement.
- 3.2 The following data shows the number of formal discipline and grievance processes undertaken between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024.

Grievance	- 7
Discipline	- 18
Absence	- 11
Capability	- 3
- 3.3 There has been an increase in the number of reported disciplines and grievances, potentially due to the 'Crimestoppers' whistleblowing hotline established enabling concerns to be raised.
- 3.4 A number of discipline processes involved personnel at a particular station or team, or associated with a single allegation, as a result of fact finding identifying issues that required further investigation.
- 3.5 Where stations or teams have had involvement in a discipline case, support from GCC-HR has assisted improvement and rebuilding process. This has been well received by those involved.

4 Personal Development Reviews

- 4.1 There is an expectation that all staff will undergo a Personal Development Review. This annual appraisal is held annually but can be reviewed throughout the year, particularly if there is a change in circumstances – such as a promotion or transfer.
- 4.2 The recording of appraisals moved across to an electronic platform – PDRpro, replacing paper copies in June 2023.
- 4.3 Between 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024, the following results were returned for completed appraisals.
 - 4.3.1 74.7% of staff had an appraisal in the time period
 - 4.3.2 Support Staff – 60% completed (20 staff without an appraisal)
 - 4.3.3 73.7% of on-call firefighter had an appraisal.
- 4.4 Feedback from users have identified changes to the PDR process which will facilitate streamlining of the questions, whilst ensuring alignment to the Service's objectives and overall plan.

5 Leavers

- 5.1 Staff turnover across GFRS is currently 10.44%. There were 49 leavers between 1st April 2023 and 31st March 2024.
 - Support Staff – 9
 - On-call - 28
 - Wholetime - 10
- 5.2 The majority of wholetime staff leaving GFRS were as a result of retirements. Future retirements and leavers are identified and planned for through the Workforce Planning Team, to ensure recruitment and promotion supports maintaining staff numbers.

6 Sickness

- 6.1 At the end of Quarter 4 – (1st January 31st March 2024) the average 'working days lost' due to sickness as a 'full time equivalent' were;

Wholetime staff	-	3.57 days
On-call staff	-	4.46 days
Support staff	-	2.71 days
Control	-	2.35 days

Long term sickness (above 28 days)

Wholetime staff - 15 cases

On-call staff - 14 cases

- 6.2 Of those who were long term sick, stress was the diagnosed cause which resulted in 11 wholetime staff being off and 5 on-call staff.
- 6.3 Stress and Musculoskeletal injuries are the main cause of sickness both short and long term.
- 6.4 The Health and Safety Team work with Occupational Health to ensure staff are appropriately referred to deal with stress and support their return to work.
- 6.5 The Firefighters Charity is available to support both rehabilitation and recuperation.
- 6.6 The Service signposts to the Employee Assistance Programme to support individuals if there are stressors identified through conversations with managers.